



INDIANA CHOICE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

How schools can participate

- 1) Read through the materials at <http://www.doe.in.gov/improvement/school-choice/choice-scholarships>, especially the “**FAQ for Schools**” document as a starting point. These materials provide important background on rules and requirements for participating schools. While the page itself is divided into ‘Participating Schools’ and ‘Interested Parents’ segments, both include valuable information for a school administrator.
- 2) If your school is not currently accredited by the State Board or a Board-recognized entity, you must complete the appropriate process for accreditation. **Accreditation** is a program requirement (IC 20-51-1-4.7), and schools ‘in the process of’ accreditation will not be allowed to participate. The department’s Director of Accreditation is Dr. George Frampton, (317) 232-9166.
- 3) Be sure that your school has a **lottery process** in place; IC 20-51-4-3(c) says that if a school receives more Choice Scholarship applications for enrollment than spaces that the school has available, then the school shall hold a lottery of those students who met the criteria for admission. The preceding subsection states that a school shall apply its written admissions policy fairly and without discrimination (IC 20-51-4-3(b)). The department interprets that these two provisions operate together such that:
 - A school may make its admissions decisions prior to and independent of the lottery. If a school’s written admissions policy states that preference shall be given to church members, then the school may apply that policy so long as it is applied fairly and without discrimination.
 - If, after offers of admission have been made to students according to the admissions policy, a school has more choice scholarship students who seek to actually enroll by the school’s enrollment date than the number of spaces that the school has available, then the school shall hold a lottery.
 - If a lottery is held, the only students who may be excluded from the lottery process and preferenced for enrollment are students who 1) have siblings enrolled at the school; or 2) students who attended the school in the prior year.
 - After the lottery date has passed, the school may continue to admit students via a first-come, first-served basis until desired capacity has been reached. However, ‘first-come, first-served’ implies that the school has first admitted any students who were part of the lottery pool that the school did not originally have room for.
- 4) Fill out the **school application form** and send it to ChoiceSchool@doe.in.gov. Provide any related attachments (example: proof of accreditation) on a scanned document included with the application itself. Make sure that you provide up-to-date contact information (including email address) so that your school will receive important updates from the department.
If you are a currently participating school that **does not intend to participate in the 2012-2013 school year, please send a brief letter to the email address above (attention:

Neil Ruddock) stating as much. It is important that the department keep the list on the website updated for interested parents.**

- 5) Fill out the **state vendor form** from the Auditor of State, listed as “Vendor Information SF# 53788” at <http://www.in.gov/auditor/2365.htm>. Complete and submit this form in a timely manner to Laura Snyder (Indiana Dept. of Education, 151 W. Ohio Street, Indianapolis IN 46204 or fax to 317-232-0504) so that the Choice Scholarship payment process will run smoothly. Schools already registered as a vendor for Free/Reduced Lunch, textbook rental assistance or other state programs need not do so again.
- 6) **Schools will be notified** electronically once the department approves their application, and the school’s name/website will appear on the department’s website as a resource for parents. At this point, access to the student application function will be provided by department staff.
- 7) When you verify students’ household income, be sure to maintain **records of the income documents** in a secure place for at least three years. These documents are subject to department inspection at any time.
- 8) Be sure that you have a means of quickly communicating with parents of students that are approved for a Choice Scholarship. The department will not allow the Auditor of State to make electronic transfers of Choice Scholarship funds until both the parent and the school sign the **distribution endorsement form** (released by the department in October and February). These signed forms will be required for all Choice Scholarship payments.
- 9) Make sure that there are one or more points of contact available at the school who are familiar with the program. This is important for several reasons:
 - a. Schools are required by law to “promptly” provide parents with their child’s ISTEP+ scores. The State Board interprets this as one week from the date scores are sent by the department, which is generally early June (ISTEP+) or July (ECA scores).
 - b. The volume of information is such that any staff turnover/transitions at the school could increase the possibility of a deadline being missed if the deadline falls within the transition.

If you would like a staff member to be added to the department’s notification list for program updates, WebEx sessions discussing program compliance etc., please contact ChoiceSchool@doe.in.gov noting the email addresses that you’d like added to the list.

- 10) Be sure to designate a Corporation Test Coordinator as the point of contact for all information regarding statewide assessments, and send this individual’s information to istep@doe.in.gov. Information sent to this email address should include:
 - a. School name and state-issued number (example, A555);
 - b. Corporation Test Coordinator (CTC) name;
 - c. Email address and phone number (including area code) of the CTC.

If there are questions related to the contents of the above, please direct those to ChoiceSchool@doe.in.gov